In Support of the Re-Introduction and Supervision of Certain Endangered Lepidoptera

By L. McLeod*

Approximately one year ago I was very surprised to read certain passages of a book review by Mr. E. H. Wild of "Butterflies on my Mind" by Dulcie Gray. (*Ent. Rec. J. Var.* **90**, p. 316). Although I agree with much of what Mr. Wild had to say, I feel that I cannot accept without comment, some of his personal views of butterfly conservation which he expressed in his book review.

One statement in particular aroused my indignation. I quote "*The cases of the Large Copper at Wood Walton and of the Swallowtail at Wicken are examples of useless endeavour.*" I have waited in vain for twelve months for comment from other readers of the *Record*, and can only assume that I must be part of a small minority who find this statement repulsive.

Come, come, Mr. Wild. Criticising a lady on her views of conservation and at the same time leaving yourself open to similar criticism.

Although I have never seen the Large Copper at Wood Walton, I am sure that the sight of these insects has given pleasure to many people. This alone makes it a worthwhile endeavour. I recall with pleasure my first encounter with *Lycaena dispar rutilus* in Italy (McLeod 1974), and I am personally thankful that one can at least see *L. dispar batavus* alive in its natural habitat. What a pity that action was not taken last century before our own subspecies became extinct. How often in the future, I wonder, will these same words be echoed?

Many examples can be quoted of successful re-introduction of mammals and birds into new reserves or into areas where they had been exterminated by man's endeavours. Sometimes the only living colonies from which introductions could be made were captive colonies in private zoos. Obvious examples are Père David's Deer and the Arabian Oryx (Fitter 1967, Clarke 1977, Jungius 1978).

As an extension from this it is quite logical that the same procedure can be applied to insects. Although there may be several examples, the only one which comes to mind is that of *L. dispar batavus* which was re-introduced from England to a reserve in its native country Holland. I acknowledge that the problems involved are different and perhaps more difficult. Obviously continuous inbreeding under artificial conditions is not to be recommended, but this was not the case with *Papilio machaon* at Wicken (Dempster et al 1976), or *L. dispar*.

It is also a valid point to note that the Norfolk Broads, where *P. machaon* occurs, is in a decline as far as wildlife

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is concerned, whereas Wicken Fen is not. The Swallowtail in Norfolk may not be in danger now but can we be sure that the present pollution (very well illustrated in a recent Anglia Television film — "No Lullaby for Broadland") and alteration (a current project) of the Broads will not increase, thus endangering the largest and most beautiful of our already reduced number of butterfly species. Surely it is commonsense to attempt a re-introduction into an area where it "recently" occurred, as well as trying to maintain its present locality. Should such an attempt at re-introduction fail, (as I believe with the Swallowtail at Wicken) then at least we have learnt something and we have information which is extremly useful for the next attempt.

No, Mr. Wild. The introduction/re-introduction of uncommon or rare species into suitable habitats is certainly not, to my mind, useless endeavour. The maintenance of captive or "protected" stock to ensure survival is also worthwhile. "*Take care of the habitat and the species will take care of themselves, if possible.*" A very nice slip-clause at the end, Mr. Wild. It hints of a slight uncertainty on your part. Have you not heard of Murphy's and Finnigan's Laws? When considering the survival of a species one must be prepared for all possible catastrophes.

The recent "extinction" of *Maculinea arion* in Britain would not have occurred if conservation of the species had begun sooner (Ratcliffe 1979) or if thorough ecological studies had been completed ten years ago. I maintain a hope that there might still be a small undiscovered population surviving somewhere in Britain (see Lodge 1979) from which introductions to other areas might eventually be made.

Let us hope that the recent government cuts in spending will not effect the work of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology and the Nature Conservancy Council. Economics and organisation are probably the main factors limiting wildlife conservation, and organisations such as these are of primary importance in this field. This view was also expressed by Morton (1979,) although in a somewhat different fashion. The recent "extinction" of the Large Blue in Britain is surely a warning to us all, especially the vast numbers of amateur entomologists, that now is the time to begin greater efforts at understanding the requirements of our insect fauna. If adequate funds are not available (as expressed by Mr. Morton) then the studies must be carried out by those of us who are not concerned with financial gain and by those who have adequate time on their hands. Are there no longer people who have a passionate interest in such subjects?

I will leave readers with a quotation from Dr. Ratcliffe, which I consider to be very appropriate here. "*Nothing is safe now, anywhere in the world. How much survives will depend on how many people care, how much they care, and what they are prepared to do.*"

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Current Literature

Life on Forty Acres by **Barry Phillip Moore.** Pp. xii, 184; numerous illustrations. E. W. Classey, 1978. £5.50.

I was first acquainted with this work in 1979, while still an expatriate Australian experiencing the rigours of the nasty arctic winter of that year in darkest Britain. I'd had enough and was eagerly awaiting transportation to the colony sometime in March, once home to savour again those wonderful commodities or sunshine and an exhilarating wild environment. Then Barry Moore's book arrived. I read the first chapter and the yearning for home increased. It is by no means a sentimental book, rather a leisurely account of the natural history of its fortunate author's forty acres of bushland in the Australian Capital Territory.

Dr. Moore, like myself, is not Australian by birth, but rather by choice. We both arrived coincidentally in the same year, 1958, and although we've never met seem to have interesting parallels in our experiences in this the largest Island. I am not as fortunate as Dr. Moore, being a good 37 acres short of somewhere to spend *my* life — but his book brought back to me the joys and frustrations of owning my own piece of Australian Bush.

He named his property "Calosoma" after the beautiful green caterpillar-hunting beetle *Calosoma schayeri* very common in the district. The book opens with an account of his choice ofa suitable site and the trials and tribulations of getting himself established. There is the poignant and simple account of his wife's tragic death before the dream could be realised, but from there he strides forward to achieve it alone. The following chapters contain a most entertaining and scientific (yes the two are compatible) discourse of the fauna and flora of Calosoma. Dr. Moore's obvious knowledge and interests in entomology and botany are highlighted throughout his writing and field sketches. He has, however, a deep spiritual affinity for his land and *all* its creatures. His description of his first winter in the district, the great cover of whiteness on the higher ground is pure delight. I am reminded